

Exhibit 1

An official website of the United States government. [Here's how you know](#)

May 5, 2017

[Twitter](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=%E2%80%98Playpen%E2%80%99%20Creator%20Sentenced%20to%2030%20Years&url=https://www.fbi.gov/news/st%20creator-sentenced-to-30-years) ([https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=%E2%80%98Playpen%E2%80%99%20Creator%20Sentenced%20to%2030%20Years&url=https://www.fbi.gov/news/st%20creator-sentenced-to-30-years))

[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?url=https://www.fbi.gov/news/st%20creator-sentenced-to-30-years) (<https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?url=https://www.fbi.gov/news/st%20creator-sentenced-to-30-years>)

[Email](mailto:u=https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/playpen-creator-sentenced-to-30-years) (<mailto:u=https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/playpen-creator-sentenced-to-30-years>)

[Email](https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/playpen-creator-sentenced-to-30-years) (<https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/playpen-creator-sentenced-to-30-years>)

'Playpen' Creator Sentenced to 30 Years

Dark Web 'Hidden Service' Case Spawned Hundreds of Child Porn Investigations

'Playpen' by the Numbers

The ongoing investigation of the Playpen child pornography website and its members led to its takedown in 2015 and has produced the following results through continued efforts by law enforcement agencies around the world:



As of May 4, 2017

(<https://www.fbi.gov/image-repository/playpen-by-the-numbers.jpg>)

The creator and lead administrator of what was believed to be the world's largest child pornography website—with more than 150,000 users around the world—was sentenced this week to 30 years in prison.

Steven W. Chase, 58, of Naples, Florida, created a website called Playpen in August 2014 on the Tor network, an open network on the Internet where users can communicate anonymously through "hidden service" websites—where criminal activity is not uncommon. Chase ran the Playpen website, where members uploaded and viewed tens of thousands of postings of young victims, indexed by age, sex, and the type of sexual activity involved.

The case—and the thousands of follow-up investigations it has launched—is unprecedented in its scope and reach, [Staff officer said](#). It represents the Bureau's most successful effort to date against users of Tor's hidden service sites. [And it has opened](#) new avenues for international cooperation in efforts to prosecute child abusers around the world.

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"We were only able to pull it off with a lot of support from our international partners and field offices," said Special Agent Dan Alfin, who investigated the case as part of the Bureau's Violent Crimes Against Children section.

The case opened shortly after Steven Chase launched Playpen in the summer of 2014. The FBI, which has numerous investigations involving the dark web, quickly became aware of the site, but "given the nature of how Tor hidden services work, there was not much we could do about it," Alfin recalled.

That is, until December 2014, when Chase slipped up and revealed Playpen's unique IP address—a location in the U.S. The gaffe was noticed by a foreign law enforcement agency, which notified the FBI.

"From that point we took normal investigative steps—seized a copy of the website, served search warrants for e-mail accounts, followed the money—and everything led back to Steven Chase," said Alfin. Chase was sentenced Monday in North Carolina in connection with engaging in a child exploitation enterprise and multiple child pornography charges. His sentencing follows those of two co-defendants who were also administrators on the website—Michael Fluckiger, 46, of Indiana, and David Browning, 47, of Kentucky—who were each given 20-year prison terms earlier this year.

Arresting Playpen's administrators, however, was only the beginning. In January 2015, the FBI, in partnership with the Department of Justice Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, launched Operation Pacifier—an effort to go after Playpen's thousands of members. Using a court-approved network investigative technique, agents uncovered IP addresses and other information that helped locate and identify users. Investigators sent more than 1,000 leads to FBI field offices around the country and thousands more to overseas partners, Alfin said.

Arrests and other enforcement actions have occurred in countries far and near. Europol, the European Union's agency for law enforcement cooperation, reported arrests, along with Israel, Turkey, Peru, Malaysia, Chile, and the Ukraine. International agencies critical to the investigation included CNCPO Polizia Postale e Comunicazioni of Italian State Police, the United Kingdom's National Crime Agency, and New Zealand's Department of Internal Affairs.

Even some countries where law enforcement cooperation has been historically limited were, in this case, especially helpful in pursuing the FBI's leads on former users and contributors to Chase's Playpen site.

"Members of his enterprise who were raping children, who were producing child pornography all around the world—those cases continue to be indicted and prosecuted," Alfin said.

In addition to taking down the website, the ongoing investigation, as of May 4, 2017, has produced the following results:

- At least 350 U.S.-based individuals arrested
- 25 producers of child pornography prosecuted
- 51 hands-on abusers prosecuted
- 55 American children successfully identified or rescued
- 548 international arrests, with 296 sexually abused children identified or rescued

The Playpen site has been down for more than two years. But similar sites continue to operate and proliferate on the dark web.

"It's ongoing and we continue to address the threat to the best of our abilities," said Alfin. "It's the same with any criminal violation: As they get smarter, we adapt, we find them. It's a cat-and-mouse game, except it's not a game. Kids are being abused, and it's our job to stop that."

Stay Connected with any criminal violation: As they get smarter, we adapt, we find them. It's a cat-and-mouse game, except it's not a game. Kids are being abused, and it's our job to stop that.

Dan Alfin, special agent, FBI Violent Crimes Against Children Section
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Resources

- Florida Man Sentenced to Prison for Engaging in a Child Exploitation Enterprise (<https://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices/boston/news/press-releases/florida-man-sentenced-to-prison-for-engaging-in-a-child-exploitation-enterprise>)
- Europol press release: Major Online Child Sexual Abuse Operation Leads to 368 Arrests in Europe (<https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/major-online-child-sexual-abuse-operation-leads-to-368-arrests-in-europe>)

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